

KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

ALIGNED WITH
ORGANIZATIONAL
PURPOSE AND
OBJECTIVES



VISIBLE SUPPORT
AND
ENDORSEMENT



SUSTAINED
PROMOTION
AND MARKETING



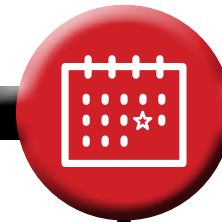
FLEXIBLE
AND
INCLUSIVE



AFFORDABLE



NEAR-TERM
AND
SUCCESS-FOCUSED



MEASURED
AND
MONITORED



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UNDERSTANDING THE KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

These key elements of successful tuition assistance programs represent best practices and describe a full range of possible options. Organizations should choose and adapt those elements that fit their unique circumstances, resources, objectives, and obligations.

ALIGNED WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- **Strategic integration:** A tuition assistance program is an integrated investment into key organization strategies:
 - o Internal talent development is supported by leveraging tuition assistance programs to help build both generalized and specialized skills.
 - o External recruitment and talent acquisition are strengthened by publicizing a tuition assistance program as a facet of employment branding and a means of enhancing ability to compete for talent.
 - o Corporate responsibility and community-building receive support when tuition assistance programs help employees increase capabilities to fulfill roles outside the organization.
- **Administration:** Tuition assistance programs require an appropriate centralized structure, accountability, and administrative resources.

VISIBLE SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT

- **Leadership support:** Successful tuition assistance programs require support and buy-in from senior executives and from leaders and managers at all other organizational levels.
- **Talent integration:** Integration into all major talent practices (workforce planning, performance management, learning and development, succession planning, rewards and recognition, etc.) ensures synergy among tuition assistance programs and other people-centric initiatives.

SUSTAINED PROMOTION AND MARKETING

- **Internal promotion:** Building visibility, interest and participation in tuition assistance programs is accomplished, in part, by the following:
 - o Ongoing multi-channel marketing and communication to employees about the program and its benefits, including publicizing employee success stories and how-to examples. Some companies construct classrooms in the workplace to provide greater visibility of educational assistance in action.
 - o Promotion to managers demonstrates and reinforces their perception of program value by showcasing engagement, retention, performance improvement, and other business benefits.
 - o Dedicated online presence provided by an easy-to-find-and-use website or web page presents comprehensive tuition assistance program information.
- **External marketing and communication:** Publicizing tuition assistance as an element of employer branding and talent acquisition supports successful competition for talent.

FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

- **Minimum requirements:** Eligibility for tuition assistance programs is open to all employees (full-time and part-time) after successful completion of no more than 90 days of employment.
- **Maximum choice:** Tuition assistance is not limited to programs of study specifically related to an organization, the industry in which it operates, or an employee's job role. Further, tuition assistance is available for a broad array of educational organizations.

AFFORDABLE

- **Budget friendly:** Tuition assistance programs require minimal or no repayment by participants. Organizations pay tuition, fees, and textbook costs in advance, relieving employees of financial responsibility and avoiding lengthy waits for reimbursement.

NEAR-TERM AND SUCCESS-FOCUSED

- **Short- and long-term benefits:** Tuition assistance offers employees access to courses or programs of study that address essential foundational skills needed for present job performance and enables individuals to pursue education for current and future career development.
- **Extra credit:** To enhance motivation and reduce time to complete goals, tuition assistance programs permit educational credits to be awarded for completion of approved work experiences and internal training.
- **Recognition and rewards:** Upon educational program completion, employees' achievements are recognized, and individuals may be awarded greater responsibility, higher pay, and/or positioned for advancement. Managers are rewarded for development of their direct reports/team members.
- **Support and guidance:** Tuition assistance program participants receive advice, counseling and support from skilled coaches or educational advisory services to aid with choosing schools and programs of study, completing applications, sustaining motivation, and overcoming any other hardships that threaten educational success.

MEASURED AND MONITORED

- **Participant metrics:** Basic measurement includes participation in tuition assistance programs and employee feedback. Participant progress through the program is monitored, and performance and promotions/advancements are tracked post-completion.
- **Impact metrics:** For the organization, program financial aspects (expenditures, contracted rates, etc.) are tracked, and assessments include impacts on key business and performance indicators (such as talent acquisition, internal mobility, and retention).

For organizations creating tuition assistance programs, questions to ask:

- Why does (or should) the organization provide a tuition assistance program?
- Does the organization have all necessary resources (financial/non-financial) to invest?
- Who does the organization expect to benefit by providing a tuition assistance program?
- What are the benefits to the organization and the employees who take part?
- How will the organization ensure the program is promoted and reinforced?
- What will the organization do to ensure those who want to take part are able to do so?
- Does the envisioned tuition assistance program include the key elements described here?

For organizations modernizing existing tuition assistance programs, questions to ask:

- What aspects of the tuition assistance program work well? What aspects need improvement and in what ways?
- Does the organization have all resources (financial/non-financial) required to execute desired improvements or changes?
- Is the organization realizing the benefits originally anticipated from its tuition assistance program?
- Are the intended audiences using the tuition assistance program and realizing the benefits anticipated for them? Should other audiences be added?
- Does the tuition assistance program structure include the key elements described here?

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